

The 10 Commandments of Writing Essays

I. Thou shalt read the book or text on which you are writing.

(When you refer to characters that aren't actually in the book, I know you're bluffing in the academic sense. I call.)

II. Thou shalt know *and follow* the basic MLA requirements in all essays.

(Confused? Purdue OWL.)

III. Thou shalt not rely on paraphrase only and expect an A.

(Dig in. Use actual textual support. Paraphrase only occasionally.)

IV. Thou shalt get someone of equal or greater writing ability to proofread before you submit.

(Don't throw away points because you were too lazy to get another set of eyes to look at it.)

V. Thou shalt not use personal, first person pronouns.

(I KNOW it's your opinion. You're writing the paper. Presumably.)

VI. Thou shalt read your paper out loud at least once before submitting.

(Many sentences that look good on the page sound like nonsense read aloud.)

VII. Thou shalt give good analysis of any quotations you use to support your thesis.

(Make that connection between text and thesis clear. Slapping a quote in you fail to analyze is like inviting a friend to a party and then not talking to them.)

VIII. Thou shalt construct a solid thesis and let it be the backbone of your paper.

(You cannot write a good paper with a weak thesis any more than you could make a tasty meatloaf with rancid beef.)

IX. Thou shalt embrace transition words and use them often.

(Furthermore, whereas, however, similarly- all these make relationships between concepts clear to the reader.)

X. Thou shalt not wait until the night before to write.

(Quality writing, like anything worthwhile, takes time and effort. Embrace the process, commit to it)